

Message Text

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PEKING FOR AG OFFICER

FROM: AGRICULTURAL OFFICER

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, CH
SUBJECT: PRC HARVEST CLAIMS

1. SUMMARY. NCNA REPORTS ON THE 1977 HARVEST INDICATE GRAIN PRODUCTION
FELL SHORT OF THE MEDIOCRE 1976 HARVEST. THE OUTTURN OF COTTON,
FIBERS,
FLUE-CURED TOBACCO, AND TEA WAS SAID TO BE UP OVER 1976, BUT NONE
WERE CLAIMED TO HAVE YIELDED A RECORD CROP. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO A NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY (NCNA) RELEASE IN PEKING
ON DECEMBER 26, "REPORTS ON FULFILLMENT OF STATE PLAN AHEAD OF
SCHEDULE HAVE BEEN POURING IN." THE GROSS INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT VALUE
AS OF END OF NOVEMBER WAS 13.7 PERCENT UP ON THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD
OF LAST YEAR AND IS ESTIMATED TO TOP 14 PERCENT OVER THE WHOLE YEAR
OF 1976 BY THE END OF THE YEAR. IN CONTRAST, THE REPORT WAS NOT AS
OPTIMISTIC OVER THE PERFORMANCE IN AGRICULTURE. THE HARVEST
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WAS SAID TO BE "FAIRLY GOOD ... DESPITE SERIOUS NATURAL
DISASTERS EARLIER IN THE YEAR."

3. ON DECEMBER 27, NCN A REITERATED "THE FAIRLY GOOD HARVEST
... IN THE TEETH OF UNUSUAL DROUGHT AND OTHER NATURAL
ADVERSITIES" AND ADDED THAT GRAIN PRODUCTION FOR THE YEAR
AS A WHOLE REACHED 1976 LEVEL. THE PRODUCTION OF INDUSTRIAL

CROPS INCLUDING COTTON, JUTE, AMBARY HEMP, FLUE-CURED TOBACCO AND TEA SHOWED INCREASES OVER 1976.

4. NCNA (DEC. 27) SINGLED OUT THREE PROVINCES (ALL HAVING BEEN UNDER THE BAD INFLUENCE OF THE "GANG OF FOUR"), HEILUNGKIANG, SZECHWAN AND KWEICHOW FOR THEIR GOOD PERFORMANCE IN AGRICULTURE. HEILUNGKIANG WAS SAID TO HAVE ACHIEVED A 10 PERCENT INCREASE IN GRAIN AFTER OVERCOMING SPRING DROUGHT AND EARLY FALL FROST. SZECHWAN, A MAJOR GRAIN PRODUCER, GATHERED A RECORD HARVEST THIS YEAR, AND THERE WERE INCREASES IN COTTON, OILSEEDS, TOBACCO, SUGARCANE AND BAST FIBERS. IN KWEICHOW, GRAIN PRODUCTION INCREASED BY 24.1 PERCENT OVER LAST YEAR, SURPASSING THE PREVIOUS PEAK OF 1973 BY 8.5 PERCENT.

5. A REVIEW OF THE WEATHER CONDITIONS DURING 1977 WAS MADE IN THE NCNA, DEC. 27, RELEASE. IT REFERRED ESPECIALLY TO THE FOLLOWING: (1) THE SEVEREST SPRING DROUGHT DURING THE PAST 20 ODD YEARS, (2) SHORTAGE OF PRECIPITATION OVER MOST OF THE COUNTRY DURING THE SPRING, (3) SEVERE COLD DURING JANUARY AND FEBRUARY OVER NORTH CHINA AREAS AND PARTS OF THE YANGTZE REGION AND SOME SAREAS SOUTH OF IT, (4) NO SNOWFALL IN PARTS OF NORTH CHINA UNTIL MARCH OR APRIL, (5) MEAN TEMPERATURE DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR OVER MOST PARTS OF CHINA BEING SUB-NORMAL, THUS ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE GROWTH OF CROPS, (6) SUDDEN RISE IN TEMPERATURE IN JULY WHICH AGAIN ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE "SUMMER CROPS" AND (7) TYPHOONS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WINDS OF GALE FORCE, WATERLOGGING, HAILSTORMS, AND INSECT PESTS AND PLANT DISEASES THAT HAD INFLICTED DAMAGE ON CROPS IN A NUMBER OF AREAS. IN SUCH A DISASTROUS YEAR, THE STUBBORN FIGHT PUT ON BY THE MILLIONS OF COMMUNE MEMBERS TO MINIMIZE THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY NATURAL ADVERSITIES, THE PRACTICE OF SCIENTIFIC FARMING, THE LARGE-SCALE WATER CONSERVATION PROJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN SO FAR COMPLETED, INCREASED APPLICATION OF CHEMICAL FERTILIZER, INCREASED USE OF FARM MACHINERY -- ALL HELPED IN ACHIEVING THE RELATIVELY GOOD HARVEST THIS YEAR.

6. COMMENT. THE NCNA ANNOUNCEMENT CLEARLY INDICATES THE 1977 HARVEST IS DISAPPOINTING FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR. PEKING HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZING THE HARVEST AS "FAIRLY GOOD" FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, BUT IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE DECEMBER 27 RELEASE THAT A COMPARISON WAS MADE WITH THE 1976 HARVEST. PRIOR TO THIS RELEASE, PEKING HAD HEDGED ON 1977 GRAIN HARVEST AND HINTED THERE COULD BE AN INCREASE OVER 1976. FOR EXAMPLE, VICE-MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, HSIAO PENG, TOLD AN FAO CONFERENCE IN ROME ON NOVEMBER 19 THAT THE OUTPUT OF GRAIN, COTTON, AND OILSEEDS WOULD ALL BE UP OVER 1976. NCNA, NOVEMBER 7, CARRIED THE TEXT OF HSIAO PENG'S ADDRESS ONLY THE OUTPUT CLAIMS WERE MODIFIED TO READ "INCREASES HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED IN

COTTON, OILSEEDS, AND OTHER INDUSTRIAL CROPS AND AN EXCELLENT HARVEST OF GRAIN IS IN SIGHT." THUS, THE DECEMBER 26 STATEMENTS DOWN-GRADES THE CLAIM FOR BOTH GRAIN AND OILSEEDS.

7. PROVINCIAL REPORTS ON GRAIN HARVEST THUS FAR AVAILABLE SHOW THE FOLLOWING:

(A) THOSE THAT CLAIMED INCREASE:

KWANGTUNG INCREASES IN GRAIN HAVE SURPASSED THE HIGHEST LEVEL EVER RECORDED (CANTON KWANGTUN PROVINCIAL SERVICE, 12/12).

KIANGSI RECORD PRODUCTION AND PER UNIT YIELD (NCNA, 12/8).

HEILUNGKIANG TEN PERCENT OVER 1976 (NCNA, 12/3).

HUNAN INCREASE OVER 1976 (RADIO CHANGSHA, 12/3).

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KWEICHOW 24.1 PERCENT OVER 1976, 8.5 PERCENT OVER PREVIOUS PEAK (1973), (NCNA, 12/9).

LIAONING TOPPED 1976 LEVEL, SECOND BEST IN HISTORY (RADIO SHENYANG, 10/30).

SHANSI ALL-ROUND INCREASE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (ASSUMING GRAIN WAS INCLUDED), (NCNA, 12/22).

SZECHEWAN BIG INCREASE OVER 1976 (PD, 12/20).

FUKIEN RECORD, 8 PERCENT OVER 1976 (CNS, 12/25).

ESTIMATED GRAIN AREA 36 PERCENT OF NATIONAL TOTAL AND JOINT INCREASE IN GRAIN WEIGHTED BY AREA ESTIMATED AS 2.47 PERCENT AT NATION LEVEL.

(B) THOSE THAT REPORTED BUT WITHOUT COMPARING 1977 WITH 1976:

YUNNAN RELATIVELY GOOD (NCNA, 12/26).

KWANGSI GROSS VALUE IN FARM PRODUCTION INCREASED AT ANNUAL RATE OF 5.3 PERCENT BETWEEN 1971 AND 1976; NO MENTION OF 1977 (NCNA, 12/8).

KIANGSU RELATIVELY GOOD HARVEST (NCNA, 12/16).

KIRIN BUMPER HARVEST (RADIO CHANGCHUN, 11/14).

SHENSI FAIRLY GOOD HARVEST (RADIO SIAN, 11/9).

SINKIANG RELATIVELY GOOD HARVEST (RADIO URUMCHI, 11/11).

ESTIMATED GRAIN AREA FOR THESE PROVINCES 22 PERCENT OF NATIONAL TOTAL; IT IS ASSUMED THAT THEIR GRAIN HARVEST WAS ABOUT THE SAME OR LESS THAN THAT OF 1976.

(C) THOSE FOR WHICH NO REPORT HAS BEEN AVAILABLE REPRESENT ABOUT 42 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL AREA OF GRAIN. TO MAKE 1977 COMPARABLE WITH 1976, THE COMBINED LOSS IN THESE PROVINCES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHOULD NOT EXCEED THE 2.47 PERCENT ACHIEVED BY THOSE IN CATEGORY (A). ON AREA-WEIGHTED BASIS, THE AVERAGE LOSS SHOULD BE WITHIN 5 PERCENT.

8. WITH 36 PERCENT OF THE GRAIN AREA ACHIEVING PROBABLY ONLY A MODERATE INCREASE AS A WHOLE, THE CHANCES ARE THAT 1977 GRAIN HARVEST IS BELOW THAT OF 1976 -- A SITUATION PEKING LIKELY TERMS AS BOTH BEING EQUAL.

9. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME CHINA HAS PUBLICIZED AN INCREASE IN COTTON OUTPUT SINCE 1975. SINCE NO RECORD WAS CLAIMED FOR 1977, IT MUST BE ASSUMED OUTPUT IS STILL LESS THAN THE RECORD CROP OF 1973. GROWTH IN TWO MAJOR PRODUCERS OF COTTON -- HUPEH AND KIANGSU PROVINCES -- ADMITTED WAS RETARDED BY COOL TEMPERATURES, PROLONGED CLOUDY WEATHER, DAMPNESS, AND WATERLOGGING (NCNA, JUNE 29).
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